

School's Out...Who Ate? Data Highlights

Unprecedented Data Now Available

Summer meal sponsors can operate multiple sites within and across counties. As of 2012, the state requires many sponsors to report (a) the monthly number of meals served at each site and (b) the number of days per month that each site serves meals. Previously, only sponsor-level data reports were required.

The unprecedented site-level data help to better describe the reach of summer meal programs and to more accurately identify the number of California kids who are falling into the summer nutrition gap.

A New Way of Tracking Trends

The availability of site-level data has changed our method of calculating average daily participation and allows for more accurate estimates. However, the new method means that comparing average daily summer lunch participation for 2012 with previous years is akin to comparing apples and oranges. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1

New Monthly Data (Required of Many Sponsors in 2012)	Lunches Served per Month by Any One Site	÷	Number of Days per Month the Site Serves Lunch	=	Average Daily Participation by Site
Old Monthly Data (Required of All Sponsors Before 2012)	Lunches Served per Month by Multiple Sites Under One Sponsor	÷	Highest # of Days per Month Lunch is Served Among the Sponsor's Multiple Sites	=	Average Daily Participation by Sponsor

The number of summer lunches served statewide (Table 2) does allow for year-to-year comparisons while average daily participation in summer lunches does not.

Additional Resources

For the full report, policy recommendations, and additional data tables, please visit:

cfpa.net/sowa-2013

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School's Out... Who Ate? Data Highlights

California's Summer Nutrition Gap

When school is out for the summer, children and youth across California are at risk of losing access to nutritious, affordable meals. In 2012, as many as 2.1 million (or 83 percent) of California's low-income children and youth who benefitted from federally funded, free or reduced-price lunches during the school year missed out on such lunches during the summer.



↑ =100,000 children & youth benefitting from federally funded, free or reduced-price lunches

The need for nutritious, affordable meals persists throughout the year, but summer lunches reach far fewer children and youth than school lunches. Summer lunches are also served on fewer days per month than school lunches. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Free & Reduced-Price Lunches	School Year 2012*	Summer 2012*	Difference (School Year vs. Summer)
Average Daily Participation	2,519,350	423,462	-2,095,888
Average Number of Days per Month that Lunch is Served	21	18	-3

*School year statistics are calculated using March and April data. Summer statistics are calculated using July data.

Statewide Decline in the Number of Summer Lunches Served

In addition to the substantial gap between school and summer lunch participation, the number of free and reduced-price summer lunches served across California fell by over 330,000 in July 2012 compared to July 2011. (See Table 2)

This decline is part of a larger historical trend. Since July 2006, the number of free and reduced-price summer lunches served in California has decreased by over 40 percent.

Table 2

Summer Meal Programs	Number of Free and Reduced-Price Lunches Served July 2012 versus July 2011
National School Lunch Program (school sites)	-377,644
Seamless Summer Food Option (school sites & some community sites)	+128,269
Summer Food Service Program (school and community sites)	-82,652
Total	-332,047

Summary of Recommendations

Local, state, and federal decision makers can ensure that low-income children and youth in California have year-round access to healthy, affordable meals. These leaders should prioritize the funding and operation of summertime academic and enrichment programming (where most summer meals have historically been served).

Below, we offer a summary of our recommendations for additional federal and state actions to close the summer nutrition gap. Background on each of these recommendations is available in the full *School's Out...Who Ate?* report at

cfpa.net/sowa-2013.

Federal Policy Recommendations

1. Renew and Expand Summer EBT Demonstration Projects

Congress should invest in further exploration and expansion of the *Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children* demonstration projects.

2. Improve the Nutritional Quality of Summer Meals

Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) should ensure that meals served through the Summer Food Service Program reflect the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

3. Understand the Reach of Summer Programming

Congress should commission a study to develop a state-by-state indicator of participation in summer learning, enrichment, and recreation programs that includes metrics assessing access to meals, whether federally or privately funded.

State Policy and Practice Recommendations

1. Leverage Schools as Trusted and Familiar Sites for Serving Meals

The California Department of Education (CDE) should encourage all school districts to make summer meals available on all campuses offering summer programming (regardless of whether that programming is sponsored by the district or by community partners). The summer meals offered on school campuses should be available and easily accessible to all children and youth in the surrounding community (not just those enrolled in programming).

2. Employ Adequate and Effective Promotion

CDE should establish and communicate the expectation that summer meal sponsors incorporate lessons learned from research (like a recent survey¹ by the national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength) into promotional and outreach materials.

¹ <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/summer-meals/summer-meals-survey-findings>

Summary of Recommendations

CDE should intensify current efforts to communicate the expectation that all schools will inform students and families about nearby summer meal sites prior to the last day of school. This builds on requirements enacted via the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.²

CDE should work with sponsors to ensure that sites offer a “welcome packet” to first-time visitors as a means of introducing new participants to the summer meal program and in an effort to retain those participants.

3. Provide Timely, Easily Accessible Information About Summer Meal Sites

Each spring, CDE should proactively solicit information about which sites will be operating, particularly among the largest summer meal sponsors.

CDE should, to fullest possible extent, make information about summer meal sites that are open to all children and youth available through its online map each year before summer vacation begins.

4. Communicate Flexibility in Operating Summer Meal Programs

CDE should strongly encourage sponsors to utilize existing flexibility and options within the summer meal programs, such as first week site visit waivers, congregate feeding (hot weather) waivers, mobile feeding options, and flexibility around meal patterns.

5. Regularly Solicit Feedback from Sponsors and Sites

To best understand the challenges and successes experienced by summer meal providers, CDE should regularly solicit input from sponsors and site staff. The feedback provided should serve as a basis for state administrators, advocates, and other stakeholders to improve the reach and operation of the summer meal programs.

Additional Resources

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² http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP15-2011_cs.pdf

Unprecedented Data Now Available

Summer meal sponsors can operate multiple sites within and across counties. As of 2012, the state requires many sponsors to report (a) the monthly number of meals served at each site and (b) the number of days per month that each site serves meals. Previously, only sponsor-level data reports were required.

With many sponsors now reporting at the site-level, we are able to better identify the counties in which meals are actually being served. For example, if a sponsor in County A operates meal sites in County B (and reports site-level data), we can now determine that the meals are being served in County B not in County A.

The unprecedented site-level data help to better describe the reach of summer meal programs. We applaud the state for implementing the new reporting criteria for many sponsors and we applaud those sponsors for providing such valuable information. By applying the same criteria to *all* sponsors, the state could help every community in California more accurately identify the number of children and youth who are falling into the summer nutrition gap.

A New Way of Tracking Trends

The availability of site-level data has changed our method of calculating average daily participation and allows for more accurate estimates. However, the new method means that comparing average daily summer lunch participation for 2012 with previous years is akin to comparing apples and oranges. (See Figure 1)

For this reason, we strongly recommend that readers do not compare 2012 average daily participation data with data published in previous years.

Figure 1

New Monthly Data (Required of Many Sponsors in 2012)	Average Daily Participation by Site		
Lunches Served per Month by Any One Site	+	Number of Days per Month the Site Serves Lunch	=
Old Monthly Data (Required of All Sponsors Before 2012)	Lunches Served per Month by Multiple Sites Under One Sponsor	÷	Highest # of Days per Month Lunch is Served Among the Sponsor's Multiple Sites
			=
			Average Daily Participation by Sponsor

Notes

- Values in the tables below are rounded to the nearest whole number. School year statistics are calculated using March and April data. Summer statistics are calculated using July data.
- Some summer meals sponsors still provide sponsor-level data reports. Consequently, in some cases, meals associated with a sponsor's county may have been served in another county.

County	Average Daily Lunch Participation		Average Number of Days per Month that Lunch is Served		Children & Youth Served During the School Year but NOT Summer	
	School Year 2012	Summer 2012	School Year 2012	Summer 2012	Number	Percent
Alameda	58,610	18,039	20	18	40,571	69%
Alpine	63	0	19	0	63	100%
Amador	1,329	58	24	18	1,271	96%
Butte	12,645	764	20	23	11,880	94%
Calaveras	2,166	869	18	6	1,297	60%
Colusa	2,493	153	19	5	2,339	94%
Contra Costa	48,230	10,638	19	17	37,592	78%
Del Norte	1,515	146	20	19	1,370	90%
Eldorado	6,417	152	19	29	6,265	98%
Fresno	105,310	12,750	21	19	92,560	88%
Glenn	2,815	340	20	15	2,475	88%
Humboldt	6,001	632	19	20	5,370	89%
Imperial	18,571	1,394	20	18	17,176	92%
Inyo	1,009	98	18	19	912	90%
Kern	90,348	11,642	21	15	78,706	87%
Kings	13,213	1,687	20	17	11,526	87%
Lake	4,441	655	21	19	3,786	85%
Lassen	1,118	46	19	15	1,072	96%
Los Angeles	717,159	128,784	21	19	588,375	82%
Madera	16,792	1,681	20	23	15,111	90%

County	Average Daily Lunch Participation		Average Number of Days per Month that Lunch is Served		Children & Youth Served During the School Year but NOT Summer	
	School Year 2012	Summer 2012	School Year 2012	Summer 2012	Number	Percent
Marin	5,513	975	19	22	4,538	82%
Mariposa	689	18	18	14	671	97%
Mendocino	5,872	1,181	20	20	4,691	80%
Merced	34,667	6,415	20	19	28,253	81%
Modoc	763	128	19	18	635	83%
Mono	620	0	19	0	620	100%
Monterey	35,540	5,032	19	15	30,508	86%
Napa	6,626	452	20	15	6,174	93%
Nevada	2,123	267	18	19	1,856	87%
Orange	176,079	23,631	21	20	152,448	87%
Placer	13,104	818	19	19	12,286	94%
Plumas	628	0	19	0	628	100%
Riverside	196,509	15,314	21	21	181,195	92%
Sacramento	96,878	13,134	22	18	83,744	86%
San Benito	4,197	974	22	15	3,223	77%
San Bernardino	189,725	20,641	23	20	169,083	89%
San Diego	165,969	70,253	21	16	95,715	58%
San Francisco	20,139	5,873	26	21	14,265	71%
San Joaquin	66,537	18,308	23	15	48,228	72%
San Luis Obispo	9,701	861	19	16	8,841	91%

County	Average Daily Lunch Participation		Average Number of Days per Month that Lunch is Served		Children & Youth Served During the School Year but NOT Summer	
	School Year 2012	Summer 2012	School Year 2012	Summer 2012	Number	Percent
San Mateo	23,665	3,961	20	20	19,704	83%
Santa Barbara	28,239	5,081	20	18	23,158	82%
Santa Clara	75,714	9,170	21	19	66,544	88%
Santa Cruz	13,483	4,534	20	15	8,949	66%
Shasta	10,869	532	19	21	10,337	95%
Sierra	121	0	19	0	121	100%
Sliskiyou	2,423	100	19	22	2,323	96%
Solano	20,162	3,602	20	16	16,560	82%
Sonoma	21,830	3,695	23	21	18,135	83%
Stanislaus	50,152	5,138	21	21	45,014	90%
Sutter	8,471	643	18	15	7,827	92%
Tehama	5,631	452	19	15	5,179	92%
Trinity	704	39	19	20	666	94%
Tulare	49,956	4,372	20	18	45,584	91%
Tuolumne	2,015	0	19	0	2,015	100%
Ventura	46,225	5,899	21	20	40,326	87%
Yolo	10,222	1,074	24	19	9,148	89%
Yuba	7,347	367	20	18	6,980	95%

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